

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



"News from Next Door"

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2022

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God's righteousness provides perpetual peace, safe shelter



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Tower warned boaters of adverse weather for 80 years



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Pirates use strong 4th to beat Falcons at home

Hertford begins close look at flooding concerns

Housing Authority director recalls flooding from Isabel

BY REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

Hurricane Isabel happened nearly two decades ago but Rhonda Waters remembers it like it was a week ago.

Waters, who retired as director of the Hertford Housing Authority, recalled last week that eight Housing Authority units on Stokes Drive were flooded with four feet of water from the Perquimans River during the 2003 hurricane.

Waters was among the first people who showed up Jan. 18 for an open house on flooding conducted in Hertford by SWCA Environmental Consultants as part of the N.C. Division of Coastal Manage-

ment's Resilient Coastal Communities Program.

The town of Hertford, one of 26 communities in the state's 20 coastal counties participating in the project during its first year, has its eye on fixing flooding woes as a component of its Riverfront and Community Development Plan.

Other nearby communities that are participating in the project's inaugural year include Currituck County, Bertie County, the town of Windsor, Hertford County, and Dare County.

SWCA staff at the Hertford open house explained that their first step was to learn about flooding concerns in the town and listen to residents' stories about flooding. A second session will focus on proposed projects to address flooding.

Waters said eight households on the first floor of the Stokes Drive building were displaced by flooding from Isabel.

"They were never able to come back in those units," she said.

The first floor units were condemned for four years. About two years after the storm, U.S. Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., visited Hertford and learned about the damage. He helped secure federal funding to rebuild the units, Waters said.

Waters said she had been to Washington, D.C., numerous times before that to try to get funds to rebuild the units on higher ground. She said she was glad to get money to rebuild but had hoped for a new location that does not flood.

Prior to Isabel the site was not considered part of the flood plain, she said. Now it is, and the Housing Authority carries flood insurance for the property.

Waters said the building was on a four-foot foundation so the floodwaters must have reached eight feet in order for people to have water four feet high inside their home.

Waters recalled that staff explained to residents of those flooded units that they needed to go to the second floor until help arrived.

As soon as Waters and other staff members were able to get their own vehicles out they went to the site and got the families out of the building and into temporary shelter.



REGGIE PONDER/THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Rhonda Waters (right), retired director of the Hertford Housing Authority, points to a flood-prone spot on a map as Larry Sandeen of the Hertford Community Action Team looks on during an open house on flooding and resiliency in Hertford on Tuesday, Jan. 17.

See FLOODING, A3

A blanket of white

Snowstorm causes no major incidents

Officials: Residents mostly heeded warnings to stay home

From staff reports

The winter storm that blew through eastern and central North Carolina late Friday and early Saturday blanketed Perquimans County with snow but didn't cause any serious incidents.

Various parts of Perquimans received between 3.5 inches and 7 inches of snow. But the county escaped serious weather-related incidents, according to county emergency officials.

Jonathan Nixon, the county's emergency services director, credited the public for not unnecessarily venturing out on snow-covered roads.

"Thanks to the public for heeding the warnings and being cautious and not traveling if they didn't have to," Nixon said.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

This reader-submitted photo of Oak Grove United Methodist Church on Chapanoke Road shows the church blanketed with snow Saturday following a snowstorm overnight Friday and early Saturday morning. Areas of Perquimans received between 3.5 inches and 7 inches of snow during the storm but no serious weather-related incidents were reported, county emergency officials said.

The Perquimans Sheriff's Office assisted a few disabled motorists but no major accidents were reported.

Emergency vehicles were able to traverse roads safely as needed.

No power outages were reported in connection with the snowstorm.

The Perquimans County Schools were closed Friday and because of the threat of icy roads offered remote learning to students on

Monday.

Citing the possibility of roads refreezing Sunday night, Perquimans officials also elected to open county offices on a three-hour delay Monday. The town of Winfall also

opened on a three-hour delay Monday. The town of Hertford, however, opened at 8 a.m.

The county's landfill and solid waste convenience sites opened after a two-hour delay on Monday.

Hertford renames BLM Ave. Hyde Park

Name switched back after residents opposed change

BY REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

Hyde Park is again Hyde Park.

Hertford Town Council changed the name of Black Lives Matter Avenue back to Hyde Park during its meeting Jan. 10.

Councilwoman Connie Brothers said she had spoken with members of First Missionary Baptist Church, which is located on the street, and many of them expressed concern about the name change by the previous council to Black Lives Matter Avenue.

Brothers said church members were adamant in their belief that "all lives matter."

"They would like it changed back to Hyde Park," she said.

During the public comment period at the council

See PARK, A3

Active shooter drill set for courthouse

Feb. 4 drill to generate real response to simulated event

BY REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

The Perquimans County Courthouse will be the site of an "active shooter" drill on the afternoon of Feb. 4. Participants will meet at the Hertford Fire Depart-

ment at noon for a pre-drill briefing and then around 1 p.m. travel to the courthouse for the drill.

Jonathan Nixon, emergency services director for Perquimans, said county officials want the public to know that the drill will be taking place so they won't be frightened when they hear the sounds of simulated gunfire coming from the courthouse area.

"It's a planned event," Nixon said.

Because some of the newest 911 emergency tele-communicators will handle

Council ramps up communication efforts

Manager must respond to a citizen concern within 30 days

BY REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

Hertford Town Council has adopted a policy that requires the town manager to respond within 30 days to citizen concerns expressed at public meetings.

The new policy was proposed by Councilwoman Connie Brothers at council's Jan. 10 meeting. Brothers, a first-time town councilor elected in November's municipal election, raised the issue at the council's organizational meeting in December. Brothers recommend-

ed at the meeting that council adopt a policy allowing councilors to respond directly to citizens at public meetings.

Brothers said citizens had expressed her frustration at bringing concerns or questions to the council during the public comment period at council meetings, and then never hearing anything back in response.

However, Mayor Pro Tem Ashley Hodges suggested that Brothers bring a formal proposal for a policy change to council at its January meeting. The new policy, which was unanimously approved at the Jan. 10 meeting, calls for the town manager to respond

within 30 days to concerns expressed by citizens.

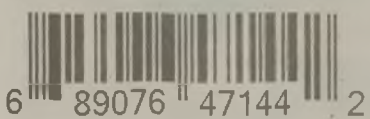
The change is part of an overall emphasis that Brothers has placed on improving communication between town officials and residents. Improved communication with residents was also a key platform issue for Brothers in her campaign for council last fall.

Sandra Anderson, the other new member of town council elected in November, shares Brothers' concern about improving the town's communication with citizens. Anderson spoke at the organizational meeting in December about her concern that many residents

were not getting important information from the town. She said she wanted the council to work together to find improved ways of getting information out to citizens.

Councilors also approved utility bill inserts at the Jan. 10 meeting as a new way of communicating with residents about things that are happening in the town. Councilman Jerry Mimplitsch's motion to approve black-and-white utility inserts was approved unanimously.

Acting Town Manager Janice Cole said the cost for the inserts would be \$113.58. She said she didn't think that cost would be burdensome for the town.



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Vol. 87, No. 4
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